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SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA ON BSEC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
SYMPOSIUM

REF: A. SECSTATE 91451

[1](#)B. ISTANBUL 000565

This cable was coordinated with Congen Istanbul.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) held on July 10 an after action review of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) 15th Anniversary Summit in Istanbul on June 25. Deputy Director General for Multilateral Affairs Ahmet Asim Arar chaired the meeting, and representatives from the Embassies of BSEC member and observer countries noted the Summit's success, under Turkey's chairmanship, in increasing BSEC's profile with the participation of 11 heads of state or government and in moving BSEC to a project-based orientation. We called attention to the September 12-13 symposium, "Environmental Protection for Economic Growth Best Practices," and invited BSEC members and observers to fully participate. There were discussions on preliminary plans for the next BSEC ministerial to be held in Turkey on 25 October 2007, during which Turkey will transfer chairmanship to Ukraine. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Turkey's DDG for Multilateral Affairs Ahmet Asim Arar opened the meeting by offering thanks to member countries and observers for their support in making the Istanbul Summit a success. In particular, the participation of eleven heads of state or government (Armenia was represented by FM Oskanian) boosted BSEC's profile in member countries and in the media. Arar stressed the success of the Turkish chairmanship in extending observer status to the EU, moving forward on BSEC reform, and transitioning BSEC to a more project-based focus, most notably with the Black Sea Ring Highway and the Motorway of the Seas. Arar also noted BSEC's potential to take on a greater political role in the region, especially in resolving the Frozen Conflicts.

[1](#)3. (SBU) There was consensus among speakers (Germany, Serbia, the UN, Georgia, Italy, the U.S., and Greece) about the success of the Summit under Turkey's chairmanship and the importance of BSEC's new project-based focus. The Serbian and Georgian representatives brought up a few of the Summit's logistical problems, which ultimately did not affect the Summit's substance. The German representative raised the issue of better communication of administrative issues to observer countries. The UN representative expressed hope that BSEC's new project-based orientation will allow greater

cooperation within BSEC and will produce bigger results. The Serbian representative also echoed Arar's statement regarding BSEC's capacity to address political issues like the Frozen Conflicts.

¶4. (SBU) Turkey's MFA looks forward to the next ministerial summit in October, during which Turkey will transfer chairmanship of BSEC to Ukraine. Arar raised the issue of financial resources, and he explained the location of the summit, originally planned for Ankara, may shift to the more affordable and touristic Turkish city of Bodrum.

¶5. (SBU) We congratulated Turkey and BSEC for a successful Anniversary Summit. Referring to Ambassador Wilson's remarks at BSEC, we said the U.S. welcomes the opportunity to invite participants from all member and observer countries to the September 12-13 symposium, "Environmental Protection for Economic Growth Best Practices." We added that it is our hope for active participation from all member and observer countries and for a successful sharing of best practices in environmental practices.

¶6. (SBU) In a follow-up visit with MFA Department of Multilateral Affairs Head Hatun Demirer, the MFA confirmed receiving the BSEC Symposium Draft Agenda and Proposal on June 23. We provided her with a more up to date draft agenda listing several confirmed speakers as well as recommended speakers. Demirer explained that she will be making written requests to the Turkish Environment and Forestry Ministry calling attention to the draft Symposium agenda and requesting participants from the Ministry. We discussed the program which includes Turkish speakers from the Government, private sector, civil society, and academia. We commented that the Symposium will be an

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important opportunity to highlight Turkey's regional leadership in environmental protection and will be attended by a senior USG representative. Demirer was pleased with the agenda. We stressed the urgency of receiving Turkish input so that invitations can be sent and the agenda finalized. Demirer agreed to move forward quickly and provide guidance to Embassy Ankara regarding the agenda and the names of participating GOT officials.

¶7. (SBU) On July 17 BSEC circulated to BSEC member states and observers a GOT diplomatic note dated July 13 conveying our draft program of events for the symposium. We will continue to work with both GOT officials and the BSEC Secretariat on the organization of this conference.

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